

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
SERVICE DIRECTIVES**

Service Directives

Part 011 The Fish and Wildlife Service Manual

Chapter 2 Standards for Format and Text

011 FW 2

2.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? The purpose of this chapter is to provide Fish and Wildlife Service employees with the information they need to write consistent, easy-to-read Service Manual chapters.

2.2 What are the objectives of this chapter? Service employees will use this chapter to:

A. Properly format chapters for the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual (FWM).

B. Include the appropriate elements in the chapters they write.

C. Write chapters using plain language principles. This chapter provides guidance for Fish and Wildlife Service employees about how to write Service Manual chapters that are clear and easy to read.

2.3 How does an author format the text when writing a chapter? Exhibit 1 is a Microsoft Word template that you can use when developing text for a chapter. You are responsible for very little formatting because the Division of Policy and Directives Management (PDM) will reformat the chapter for publication. Following are guidelines for formatting your chapter:

A. Use a standard, one column format with single spacing. Use two lines between paragraphs.

B. Assign a number or letter to every paragraph so that readers can refer to them by letter or number. Follow the standard format shown in Figure 1 below:

2.1 Put major paragraphs in the form of a question. The question should be in bold. You can answer the question right after you ask it, or you can break your answer down into understandable subsections, if appropriate.

A. The first section of Chapter 2 is 2.1.

B. If you use a Section A, then you need a B.

C. Use a capital letter for the first subsection. Do not tab. The capital letter should be in bold.

(1) If you need to break section C down to another level, identify the second level by an Arabic numeral in parenthesis. Do not tab. The numeral and parenthesis should be in bold.

(a) If you need to break section (1) down, identify the third level by a lower case letter in parenthesis. Do not tab. The letter and parenthesis should be in bold.

(b) If you use an (a), then you need a (b).

(i) If you use a fourth subdivision, like this example, identify it by a lower case Roman numeral in parenthesis. Do not tab. The numeral and the parenthesis should be in bold. Instead of using a fourth subdivision, consider revising the text.

(ii) If you use an (i), then you need a (ii).

(2) If you use a (1), then you need a (2).

Figure 1: Format for Numbering Paragraphs

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C. Avoid using the indent button in MS Word or the tab key on your keyboard. PDM will put the document in a final format for publication both in print and on the Internet (see 011 FW 3). It is much easier for PDM to format the document if you do not use indents and tabs in the draft version.

2.4 What questions should the author include in each chapter and in what order? Figure 2 below is a list of the questions that you should include in the chapter if they are applicable. We show them in the order in which you include them. Exhibit 1, the chapter template, also lists these questions. You may leave out questions that are not applicable to the chapter you are writing.

- 2.1 What is the purpose of this chapter?** This question should be in every chapter. You describe the reason you are writing the chapter.
- 2.2 What is the policy? or What are the objectives of this chapter?** You should follow this with an overview of the policy or a list of the objectives of the policy.
- 2.3 What is the scope of this chapter? or What does this chapter cover?** This question is only necessary if there is any question about to whom or what the policy covers.
- 2.4 What are the authorities for this chapter?** This question is applicable if a policy is derived from a specific law or Presidential, Secretarial, or Executive agency directive. You must then list the applicable law(s), directive(s), etc. For example:
- A. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321–4347).
 - B. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Requirements of NEPA (40 CFR 1500–1508).
 - C. 516 Departmental Manual (DM) 1–4, National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.
- 2.5 Who is responsible for (insert policy name) ?** If the chapter establishes responsibilities for managers, offices, and staff, you include this question. You follow the question with a list of the office(s), division(s), and positions responsible for carrying out all or parts of the policy.
- 2.6 What terms do you need to know to understand this chapter?** You follow this question with a list of terms and their definitions. Do not define terms that you do not use again. Also, do not define common terms or words unless the chapter uses them in an unusual manner.
- 2.7 What questions will people ask that help them to understand the policy?** From this point on, you write questions that describe the policy, procedures, and any reporting requirements associated with the policy.

Figure 2: List of Questions to Include

2.5 How long should a chapter be? Try to limit the size of chapters to fewer than five or six pages. If your chapter is longer than six pages, you should consider breaking it up into more than one chapter.

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2.6 What are some tips for writing good chapters?

- A.** First, consult with PDM and any other affected offices or divisions to see if they can help contribute to the process.
- B.** Check other FWM chapters, Director's Orders, and handbooks to be sure your chapter does not contradict them.
- C.** Use plain language (see section 2.7 below for more information).
- D.** Check your facts and make sure your information is accurate.
- E.** When you are listing laws or other policies in the authorities section of your chapter, be sure to check your references to make sure the citations are accurate and in proper format.
- F.** Identify any forms that are part of the policy. You can include a completed sample form as an exhibit, but do not include a blank form. If you plan to include a sample form:
- (1)** Make sure it has an FWS form number. See 281 FW 2 for more information about forms and getting form numbers. If the form is filled out by the public, it also needs an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval number. If it does not have a number, check with the Forms Management/Information Collection Officer in PDM.
- (2)** Give instructions for filling out and submitting the form.
- (3)** PDM will post the form on the Service forms page on the Internet in a fillable format and put a link in the chapter to the form so that it is easily accessed.
- G.** Identify any national reporting requirements that are part of the policy. A national report is one that is transmitted to or through the Washington Office to meet a reporting requirement. It must have a report control number. See 281 FW 1 for more information on national reporting requirements and how to obtain a report control number.
- H.** When you include exhibits, only use exhibits with information that will stay current for a long period of time.
- I.** If your chapter replaces an existing chapter or supersedes a part of a chapter or a Director's Order, be sure to indicate that by typing, "Supersedes XYZ, dated MM/DD/YYYY" on the top of the chapter (see Exhibit 1, the template for writing chapters).
- J.** An FWM chapter does not take the place of proposing a regulation. Do not write a FWM chapter instead of proposing a regulation.

2.7 What plain language principles does the Service use when writing a chapter? Exhibit 2 is a checklist that will help you write using plain language. When writing chapters, you should:

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A. Use active voice. When you use active voice, the person or organization responsible for taking the action is the subject of the sentence. It is easier for the reader to tell who should do what.

(1) Use active voice: "The project leader assigns tasks to the wildlife biologist."

(2) Avoid passive voice: "The wildlife biologist's tasks are assigned by the project leader."

B. Use short sentences that are easy to understand. Break up long, complicated, or run-on sentences into multiple sentences.

C. Keep your language simple. Many Government documents are full of stilted, formal language that makes the reader's eyes glaze over. Use "we" or "our" instead of "the Service," speak directly to the reader, and use easy-to-understand words.

D. Avoid jargon. Avoid technical and legal jargon whenever possible. When you must use technical terms that only certain people will recognize, be sure to include them in the "What terms do you need to know to understand this chapter?" section at the beginning of the chapter.

E. Minimize the use of acronyms. When you must use acronyms, spell them out the first time you use them.

F. Use vertical lists to make it easier for the reader to scan the document. Exhibit 3 is an example of how much easier it is to read a vertical list than a large block of text. For FWM chapters, you must assign a letter or number to each item so that the reader can reference it, if necessary.

G. Use examples to illustrate explanations. Sometimes a short, concrete example helps the reader to understand a complex idea. When appropriate, use examples instead of long blocks of text.

2.8 Who are the Service contacts who can help with plain language principles? If you would like someone to review your writing and help you with plain language principles, you should contact PDM. The staff member who edits and publishes the FWM chapters can help you.

2.9 What style manual does the Service use for capitalization, punctuation, and spelling rules? We use the *U.S. Government Printing Office Style Manual*, which is available on the Internet and in hard copy.

2.10 What is an exhibit? An exhibit is material that you would like to give readers access to, but that is not essential to the text of the chapter. Typical exhibits include illustrations, supplementary reports, templates, and organizational or flow charts.

A. Numbering Exhibits. Number exhibits consecutively in the order in which you mention them in the text of the chapter. Identify them by part and chapter number in the upper right corner of the document. For example:

011 FW 2
Exhibit 1

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B. Page Numbers on Exhibits. When an exhibit is more than one page, number each page consecutively in the upper right hand corner. For example:

011 FW 2
Exhibit 1
Page 1 of 3

2.11 What if the author wants to include technical and detailed instructions that are too specific or too long to put into a chapter? You can develop a handbook to accompany a chapter. Reference the handbook in the chapter. You must submit the handbook for review when the authorizing chapter is going through the review and surname process (see 011 FW 3 for more information). If you have not completed the handbook, you can explain that you are developing the handbook. You can then amend the chapter to reference the handbook when it is complete.

2.12 How does the author write and format amendments to chapters? If you want to make a minor change or update a chapter, and it does not require an extensive revision, then you can amend the chapter. See Exhibit 4 for an example of how to write and format an amendment. To amend the chapter, you:

A. Prepare an amendment to the chapter using the amendment format shown in Exhibit 4. The amendment must include a brief description of its purpose and a clear explanation of what you are changing or adding.

B. Prepare a surname package as described in 011 FW 3.


**Deputy
DIRECTOR**

Date: NOV 3 2005